Sailors' Career Decisions & Retention: Views from Navy Surveys

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Sources of Information on Career Decisions

- **Administrative Data Bases**
  - Official loss code assigned by Service or DoD
  - Based on separation packet submitted by command

- **Surveys of Navy Personnel**
  - Self-report data from service members
  - Occur at times other than separation

Administrative Loss Codes

- **GAO critical of use of loss codes to understand attrition**

  - Only 1 reason for separation recorded

  - Coding not consistent across locations/services

  - Codes not reliable

- **"Loss codes do not provide actionable information"**

Personnel Surveys

- **Subject to self-report bias**

- **Lack consistency of measures**

- **Can capture multiple reasons for leaving**

- **Can capture data from different points in career**

Navy Personnel Survey (NPS) 2000

- **Asked single question: "What are the top five (5) factors that will have an influence on your decision to continue with the Navy"**

- **Gave list of options:**

  -Enjoyment of my Navy job

  -My family's opinions

  -General public attitudes towards military service

  -Want to pursue college or graduate education

  -Military pay

  -Special pays

  -To accept a promotion in rank

  -Type of next duty assignment

  -Military recreation and activity facilities (MWR)

  -Military family support service

  -Co-workers/shipmates

  -Spouse or significant other's opinions

  -Special family's needs

  -Civilian job opportunities

  -Selective Reenlistment Bonus

  -Continuation Bonus

  -Qualify for a Navy training school

  -Location of next duty station

  -Military healthcare (personal)

  -Military healthcare (family)

  -Retirement benefits

  -Manpower needs of the Navy

Important Influences from NPS 2000

Enlisted:

- Location of next duty station

- Enjoyment of my Navy job

- Military pay

- Want to pursue college or graduate education

- Civilian job opportunities

Officers:

- Enjoyment of my Navy job

- Civilian job opportunities

- Military pay

- Spouse or significant other's opinion

- Retirement benefits

Argus Career Milestone Decision System

- **Argus is a web-based survey that was deployed in Feb 01**

- **Argus collects data at all transition points**

- **Uses a Influence to Stay-Influence to Leave scale**

- **Directly asks influence of each item on current career decision**

- **For each individual sailor, Argus automatically makes a list of items that sailor has indicated is an influence on their decision to stay or leave the Navy**

  - Sailors select 5 most important influences to stay
  - Sailors select 5 most important influences to leave

Navy Personnel Research, Studies, & Technology

Important Influences to Stay from Argus

Enlisted

- Medical benefits
- Family support for your career
- Satisfaction with my current job
- Education benefits
- Amount of leave you receive

Officers

- Satisfaction with my current job
- Family support for your career
- Advancement/promotion opportunities
- Immediate supervisor leadership quality
- Senior officer leadership quality

Important Influences to Leave from Argus

Enlisted

- Amount of pay received
- Advancement/promotion opportunities
- Recognition of job accomplishments
- Unit morale
- Trust in Navy leadership

Officers

- Advancement/promotion opportunities
- Availability of supplies
- Trust in Navy leadership
- Red tape to do the job
- Current job satisfaction

Summary

- **Important to consider both those intending to stay as well as those leaving the Navy in developing plans and policies**

- **Need to evaluate administrative loss codes by comparing with data from Argus**

- **Need consistency in measures across surveys**